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SUMMER EXHIBITIONS

"**F**ORM is out of fashion, drawing is out of fashion, precision and delicacy of workmanship are out of fashion," wrote Kenyon Cox in 1907 in explanation of the prejudice against the art of Lord Leighton. "The lover of beauty who has not to paint pictures or write criticisms does not much care and likes him as well as ever. As the whirligig goes round these things will come into fashion again."

The swinging of the pendulum in the direction of classicism, which this great American academician fifteen years ago predicted, seems now under way. It may be interesting to approach the special exhibitions for the summer at the Art Institute (which will continue through September) with this idea in mind. While it is not claimed that the classic spirit is the predominating note here, the works of a few artists may perhaps provide sufficient excuse for focusing the attention on form, and the other canvases may by contrast take on a fresh aspect.

The group of Greek and Roman marbles belonging to Joseph Brummer displayed in the Michelangelo court are particularly conducive to putting one in the mood for the classic, for the Greeks in their knowledge of rhythm, balance, and proportion in sculpture have set the standard for all times for the art of form.

Passing into the next gallery one finds the reaction toward the so-called academic in contemporary European art effectively illustrated by the exhibition of Alexandre Iacovleff, who, it is claimed, is inclined to the classic because of his Greek ancestry. Iacovleff went to the Italian realists for his direct inspiration, but some of his fellow artists in Paris have resurrected the discarded Ingres for their leader. This recent movement may perhaps be considered an aftermath of cubism and with post-impressionism represents a revolt against impressionism. Iacovleff, however, draws a fine distinction between his art, which he says is the result of "the maximum of the will of the artist," and the cubists', which is "more abstract."

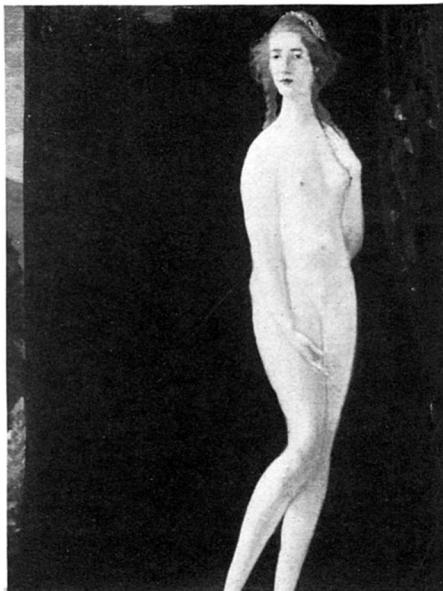
The adjoining gallery on the left containing Mr. Ryerson's Winslow Homer water colors may typify the impressionistic movement in art against which Iacovleff is revolting. Though Homer was not so much of a colorist as many of the impressionists, his attempt to express with truthfulness the effects he saw in nature was founded on tone rather than on form. On going to the gallery at the right of Iacovleff's display a spirit more kindred to that of the Russian painter's will be found in the group of paintings by Arthur B. Davies from Mr. Ryerson's collection. Iacovleff, the realist and mystic, and Davies, the poet and classicist, may seem to have little in common, but, in the art of both, form plays an important part. While with the Russian it is consciously and intensively sought for, with the American, who is absorbed in abstract design and poetical ideas, it is apparently not the result of a conscious effort. The painting "Dawn flower" was chosen for reproduction here because it is an unusually fine example of the classic in Davies' art. The steps by which Davies arrived at the difficult art of combining a feeling for form with design and at the same time introducing rhythm of color may be learned by comparing the works of his different periods as shown in this group of his paintings.

The art of Bryson Burroughs has been associated with Davies', and in this connection it is interesting to study his "Fishermen" in the Friends of American Art Collection. The two artists' interest in classical themes is expressed in totally different ways. Burroughs with his dependence on outline and disregard of the third dimension represents the primitive tradition of Puvis de Chavannes, while Davies' art is reminiscent of the Venetians. Another American classicist, also represented in the Friends of American Art Collection, is Vedder. The strong decorative and imaginative qualities in this artist's work, exemplified here in his "Fates gathering in the stars," should not be overlooked.

The gallery devoted to the Cyrus McCormick collection might come next in this résumé. It provides excellent material for an understanding of the all-absorbing interest in landscape painting in the nineteenth century, which gradually led the artist away from a study of form to color. Constable, Rousseau, Corot, Inness—each represents a step in the evolution of landscape painting by which the artist gradually freed himself from a desire to reproduce actualities—third-dimensional vistas and the roundness of trees, and sought through color to express mood. The luminists carried the artist further in this direction, with a result such as is to be seen in Metcalf's "Early spring in Central Park," while on the opposite wall Redfield's snow scene with its iridescence of color, crispness of line, and decorative feeling is both intellectual and emotional in its appeal. It is interesting to note in this connection how the leafless trees of winter and the strong contrasts of snow, sky, and streams in sunlight call for clearly defined lines and suggest patterns; this may be seen in almost any of the snow pictures in the Friends of American Art or in Mr. Schulze's collections.

Kenyon Cox's remark about the art of Lord Leighton quoted at the beginning of this article may give added interest to this artist's picture, "The Angel of Death," from the collection of Mr. Butler. It well exemplifies the attention to drawing given by the Pre-Raphaelites and other artists of their period, as do the group of paintings from Mr. Hutchinson's collection—Rossetti's "Beata Beatrix," Watts' "Death and Faith," and Boughton's "The last minstrel." The literary painting calls for a certain definiteness and preciseness of handling which is likely to result in a neglect of color.

The freedom of the French artist, unrestricted by any literary motives, is strongly shown by contrast in this same gallery. The Frenchmen might either revel in color as did Gaston La Touche (represented by his "Pagan fountain" from the Chauncey McCormick collection) or set for himself problems in fore-shorten-



DAWN FLOWER—PAINTING BY ARTHUR B. DAVIES
FROM THE COLLECTION OF MARTIN A. RYERSON

ing and perspective at the same time he indulged in color, as did Lucien Simon in "Men on the breakwater."

In this rather analytical survey of the summer exhibitions it has not been the intention to isolate color and form from one another in the mind of the reader. "Color and drawing," said Rodin, "one cannot be admired without the other, for they are one." Fashions in art may result in one or the other predominating, according to whether the spirit of the age is emotional or intellectual. But the real test of painting depends rather on the "significant" use of color and form. They are merely the artists' means of expressing that balancing of pure design and representation which makes good painting. M.B.W.

FUTURE EXHIBITIONS

PLANS are now under way to make the special exhibitions for this season as comprehensive and high in quality as possible. The program of exhibitions as far as it has been completed is given on